

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CU-02 EB-07
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3838

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, MOPS, PINS, PINT, ET
SUBJ: OVERVIEW OF PROVINCES IV - WEST AND COMMENTS

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 0163 (NOTAL) B. ADDIS ABABA 3033 (NOTAL)
C. ADDIS ABABA 3265 (NOTAL) D. ADDIS ABABA 3555 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL A SUMMARIZED DISTURBANCES AND DISSIDENCE IN
COUNTRYSIDE AS OF JANUNARY 1977. THIS FOURTH OF FOUR-PART
CABLE REPORTING PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENTS JANUARY THROUGH
JUNE 1977 AND COMMENTING ON OVERALL SITUATION.

A. WOLLEGA - LITTLE HAS CHANGED IN PROVINCE SINCE LAST
OVERVIEW (REF A). HARVEST HAS BEEN GENERALLY GOOD, SCHOOLS
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HAVE BEEN PEACEFUL, AND EPMG EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION PROGRAM RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL. THERE HAVE
BEEN NO REPORTS OF SERIOUS DISSIDENCE, AND SUDAN BORDER
AREAS REMAIN QUIET.

B. ILLUBABOR - PROVINCE HAS BEEN QUIET PAST SIX MONTHS.
ONLY INCIDENT OCCURRED WHEN TWO ETHIOPIAN-CHARTERED LIGHT

PLANES OVERFLEW AKOBA, INSIDE ETHIOPIA NEAR SUDAN BORDER, AND ENTERED NEARLY 100 KMS INTO SUDAN (REF D). PLANES HAD GONE TO REPAIR THIRD LIGHT PLANE NEAR AKOBA AND APPARENTLY "GOT LOST". RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTED TWO PLANES AND CREWS SUBSEQUENTLY RETURNED TO ETHIOPIA THREE WEEKS LATER. AS IN WOLLEGA, THERE NO REPORTED INSURGENT ACTIVITIES, AND SUDAN BORDER AREA REMAINS QUIET.

C. KAFFA - MAJOR COFFEE-GROWING PROVINCE HAS ALSO BEEN CALM SINCE LAST UPDATE. THERE FEW INCIDENTS REPORTED IN JIMMA (PROVINCIAL CAPITAL) INVOLVING STUDENT-AGE YOUGH AND POLITBURO CARDRES, BUT THEY WERE MINOR.

D. GAMO GOFFA - SINCE JANUARY, ALMOST ALL U.S. MISSIONARIES HAVE LEFT PROVINCE FOR VARIETY OF REASONS. GENERAL CAUSE HAS BEEN HARASSMENT BY LOCAL POLITICAL GROUPS OR PROVISIONAL OFFICE FOR MASS ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS (POMOA) CADRES. INCREASINGLY UNSYMPATHETIC EPMG LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS SEEMED TO ENCOURAGE PEASANTS' AND URBAN DWELLERS' ASSOCIATIONS ACTIONS BY THEIR PASSIVITY. THIS APPEARS TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ARREST AND CONTINUED DETENTION (THREE WEEKS NOW) OF AMERICAN CITIZEN WORKING THROUGH ETHIOPIAN RELIEF AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION (RRC). HIS CASE STILL PENDING. ALSO SINCE MAY, ALL TRAVELERS REQUIRED TO REPORT TO PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE UPON ENTERING AND LEAVING PROVINCE. THIS HAS NOT YET CAUSED ANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS
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AND IS FURTHER EPMG ATTEMPT TO REGULATE INTERNAL TRAVEL MORE CLOSELY. OTHERWISE PROVINCE QUIET, WITH NO REPORTS OF MAJOR SECURITY DIFFICULTIES IN SUDAN/KENYA BORDER AREA.

2. COMMENT: DURING REPORTING PERIOD INSURGENT ACTIVITIES GREATLY INCREASED IN ERITREA, HARRARGHE, BALE, SIDAMO, ARSSI, AND GONDAR AREAS, ALTHOUGH SITUATION IN LATTER PROVINCE NOW SEEMS TO BE GREATLY IMPROVED. WHILE ARSSI AND NORTHERN BALE AND SIDAMO INSURGENCIES APPEAR MANAGEABLE IN SHORT TERM, ERITREA AND TO LESSER DEGREE HARRARGHE CONTINUE TO POSE MAJOR PROBLEMS. EPMG PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVING SITUATION NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS ONLY FAIR WITH LONG TERM PROSPECTS MORE PROMISING, ASSUMING EPMG CAN DEPLOY MILITIA PRODUCTIVELY AND THUS FREE REGULAR TROOPS FOR OFFENSIVE ACTIONS. ADDIS-DIRE DAWA-DJIBOUTI RAIL LINE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PROTECT FROM DETERMINED INSURGENT ATTACKS, AND IT DIFFICULT TO FORESEE HOW RAILROAD CAN REMAIN OPEN IF SOMALI-BACKED THREAT CONTINUES TO BE SERIOUS.

3. DURING SECOND QUARTER OF 1977, EPRP THREAT TO INTERNAL SECURITY SEEMS TO HAVE DIMINISHED CONSIDERABLY. WHILE IT TRUE EPRP STILL CAPABLE OF ASSASSINATING PRO-GOVERNMENT

SUPPORTERS, WHATEVER ABILITY THEY MAY HAVE HAD TO OVERTHROW
MENGISTU REGIME APPEARS TO BE LESS NOW. EPRP POLITICAL
ACTIVITY ALMOST NIL SINCE MAY. EDU, AFTER SCORING FEW
INITIAL MILITARY SUCCESSES, NOW APPEARS TO BE ON DEFENSIVE
IN GONDAR REGIONAL AND CANNOT BE VIEWED IN ISOLATION AS
SERIOUS THREAT TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. TPLF HAS NOT
TAKEN ANY MAJOR ACTION PAST FIVE MONTHS. EPLF AND ELF
HAVE GREATLY ENHANCED THEIR POSITIONS IN ERITREA, BUT
REMAIN DIVIDED POLITICALLY AND NOT YET IN CONTROL OF ANY
STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT TOWNS IN PROVINCE. GREATEST
DETERIORATION OF INTERNAL SECURITY HAS BEEN CAUSED BY
WSLF. DEGREE OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO WSLF AND TO ERITREANS,
AS WELL AS SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO RESTRAIN SOMALI GOVERNMENT
IN OGADEN, LIKELY TO BE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS INFLUENCING
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ETHIOPIAN ABILITY TO CONTAIN INSURGENT PROBLEM. END SOMMENT.

4. EMBASSY TRAVEL GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN GREATLY SIMPLIFIED
IN PAST MONTH. DUE TO EPMG "SUGGESTED" RESTRICTIONS, IT
NECESSARY IN THEORY FOR NON-ETHIOPIANS TO OBTAIN MINISTRY
OF INTERIOR PERMISSION TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE SHOA PROVINCE. IN
ADDITION, TRAVEL TO NORTHERN SHOA REPORTED RESTRICTED DURING
MAY AND JUNE. WHEN AMERICANS DO TRAVEL ON BUSINESS OUTSIDE
SHOA WITH MINISTRY PERMISSION, EMBASSY ADVISES THEM IN
ACCORDANCE WITH MOST CURRENT INFORMATION, SIMILAR TO THAT
IN OVERVIEW.
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